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The Great Rite

Janet and Stewart Farrar

Symbolic

Preparation: the chalice should be filled with wine. A veil of at least a yard square is needed preferably of a Goddess color such as blue, green, silver, or white.

The Coven, except for the High Priestess and High Priest, arrange themselves around the perimeter of the circle, man and woman alternately as far as possible, facing the center.

The High Priestess and High Priest stand facing each other in the center of the circle, she with her back to the altar, he with his back to the South.

The High Priest kneels before the High Priestess and gives her the Five Fold Kiss; that is, he kisses her on both feet, both knees, womb, both breasts, and the lips, starting with the right of each pair. he says, as he does this:

> "Blessed be thy feet, that have brought thee in these ways.
> Blessed be thy knees, that shall kneel at the sacred altar.
> Blessed be thy womb, without which we would not be.
> Blessed be thy breasts, formed in beauty.
> Blessed be thy lips, that shall utter the Sacred Names."

For the kiss on the lips, they embrace, length to length, with their feet touching each others. When he reaches the womb, she spreads her arms wide, and the same after the kiss on the lips.

The High Priestess then lays herself down, face upwards, with her arms and legs outstretched to form the Pentagram.

The High Priest fetches the veil and spreads it over the High Priestess's body, covering her from breasts to knees. He then kneels facing her, with his knees between her feet.

The High Priest calls a woman witch by name, to bring his athame from the altar. The woman does so and stands with the athame in her hands, about a yard to the West of the High Priestess's hips and facing her.

The High Priest calls a male witch by name, to bring the chalice of wine from the altar. He does so and stands with the chalice in his hands, about a yard to the East of the High Priestess's hips and facing her.

The High Priest delivers the invocation:

> "Assist me to erect the ancient altar, at which in days past all worshipped;
> The altar of all things.
> For in old time, Woman was the altar.
> Thus was the altar made and placed,
> And the sacred place was the point within the center of the Circle.
> As we have of old been taught that the point within the center is the origin of all things,
> Therefore should we adore it;
> Therefore whom we adore we also invoke.
> O Circle of Stars,
> Whereof our father is but the younger brother,
> Marvel beyond imagination, soul of infinite space,
> Before whom time is ashamed, the mind bewildered, and the understanding dark,
> Not unto thee may we attain unless thine image be love.
> Therefore by seed and stem, root and bud,
> And leaf and flower and fruit do we invoke thee,
> O Queen of Space, O Jewel of Light,
> Continuous on of the heavens;
> Let it be ever thus
> That men speak not of thee as One, but as None;
> And let them not speak of thee at all, since thou art continuous.
> For thou art the point within the Circle, which we adore;
> The point of life, without which we would not be.
> And in this way truly are erected the holy twin pillars;
> In beauty and strength were they erected
> To the wonder and glory of all men."

The High Priest removes the veil from the High Priestess's body, and hands it to the woman witch, from whom he takes his athame.

The High Priestess rises and kneels facing the High Priest, and takes the chalice from the man witch. (Note that both of these handings-over are done without the customary ritual kiss. The High Priest continues the invocation:

"Altar of mysteries manifold,
The sacred Circle's secret point
Thus do I sign thee as of old,
With kisses of my lips anoint."

The High Priest kisses the High Priestess on the lips, and continues:

"Open for me the secret way,
The pathway of intelligence,
Beyond the gates of night and day,
Beyond the bounds of time and sense.
Behold the mystery aright
The five true points of fellowship"

The High Priestess holds up the chalice, and the High Priest lowers the point of his athame into the wine. Both use both of their hands for this. The High Priest continues:

"Here where Lance and Grail unite,
And feet, and knees, and breast, and lip."

The High Priest hands his athame to the woman witch and then places both his hands round those of the High Priestess as she holds the chalice. He kisses her, and she sips the wine; she kisses him, and he sips the wine. Both of them keep their hands around the chalice while they do this.

The High Priest then takes the chalice from the High Priestess, and they both rise to their feet.

The High Priest hands the chalice to a woman witch with a kiss, and she sips. She gives it to a man with a kiss. The chalice is passed around the Coven, man to woman, with a kiss each time, until the entire Coven has sipped the wine. The chalice can be refilled and any one can drink from it without repeating the ritual once the chalice has gone around once.

To consecrate the cakes, the woman picks up her athame, and the man, kneeling before her, holds up the dish. the woman draws the Invoking Pentacle of Earth in the air above the plate while the man says:

"O Queen most secret, bless this food into our bodies;
bestowing health, wealth, strength, joy and peace,
and that fulfillment of love that is perfect happiness."

The woman lays down her athame and passes the cakes to the man with a kiss, he passes them back with a kiss and they are passed around the Coven the same way the wine was. Be sure to save some of the wine and some cake for an offering to the Earth and the Little Folk. After the meeting, leave the offering outside of the house if working indoors, or behind in the woods or field, when you leave if you are working outdoors.

Farrar, Janet and Stewart; "Eight Sabbats For Witches"; Robert Hale 1983
Transcribed onto computer file by Seastrider

Actual

Preparation: the chalice should be filled with wine. A veil of at least a yard square is needed preferably of a Goddess color such as blue, green, silver, or white.

The Coven, except for the High Priestess and High Priest, arrange themselves around the perimeter of the circle, man and woman alternately as far as possible, facing the center.

The High Priestess and High Priest stand facing each other in the center of the circle, she with her back to the altar, he with his back to the South.

The High Priest kneels before the High Priestess and gives her the Five Fold Kiss; that is, he kisses her on both feet, both knees, womb, both breasts, and the lips, starting with the right of each pair. he says, as he does this:

> "Blessed be thy feet, that have brought thee in these ways.
> Blessed be thy knees, that shall kneel at the sacred altar.
> Blessed be thy womb, without which we would not be.
> Blessed be thy breasts, formed in beauty.
> Blessed be thy lips, that shall utter the Sacred Names."

For the kiss on the lips, they embrace, length-to-length, with their feet touching each others. When he reaches the womb, she spreads her arms wide, and the same after the kiss on the lips.

The High Priestess then lays herself down, face upwards, with her arms and legs outstretched to form the Pentagram.

The High Priest fetches the veil and spreads it over the High Priestess's body, covering her from breasts to knees. He then kneels facing her, with his knees between her feet.

The High Priest delivers the invocation:

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And the sacred place was the point within the center of the Circle.
As we have of old been taught that the point within the center is the origin of all things,
Therefore should we adore it;
Therefore whom we adore we also invoke.
O Circle of Stars,
Whereof our father is but the younger brother,
Marvel beyond imagination, soul of infinite space,
Before whom time is ashamed, the mind bewildered, and the understanding dark,
Not unto thee may we attain unless thine image be love.
Therefore by seed and stem, root and bud,
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O Queen of Space, O Jewel of Light,
Continuous on of the heavens;
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And let them not speak of thee at all, since thou art continuous.
For thou art the point within the Circle, which we adore;
The point of life, without which we would not be.
And in this way truly are erected the holy twin pillars;
In beauty and strength were they erected
To the wonder and glory of all men."

The Maiden fetches her athame from the altar and ritually opens a gate way in the Circle. The Coven file through and leave the room. The Maiden is the last one through and reseals the Circle. The High Priest removes the veil from the High Priestess's body.

The High Priestess rises and kneels facing the High Priest. The High Priest continues the invocation:

"Altar of mysteries manifold,
The sacred Circle's secret point
Thus do I sign thee as of old,
With kisses of my lips anoint."

The High Priest kisses the High Priestess on the lips, and continues:

"Open for me the secret way,
The pathway of intelligence,
Beyond the gates of night and day,
Beyond the bounds of time and sense.
Behold the mystery aright
The five true points of fellowship"
"Here where Lance and Grail unite,
And feet, and knees, and breast, and lip."

The High Priest and High Priestess now have intercourse. This is a private matter between them and none of the Coven can question them about it. When they are done, one of them ritually opens the Circle and calls the rest of the Coven. When they are back in the Circle, it is again sealed. The wine is now consecrated.

A male witch kneels in front of the altar before a female witch. He holds up a chalice of wine and she holds her athame point down and lowers the athame into the wine. The man says:

"As the athame is to the male, so the cup is to the female; and conjoined, they become one in truth."

The woman lays down her athame on the altar and kisses the man who remains kneeling and she accepts the chalice from him. She sips the wine, kisses him again and he sips, rises, and gives it to another woman with a kiss. The chalice is passed around the Coven, man to woman, with a kiss each time, until the entire Coven has sipped the wine. The chalice can be refilled and any one can drink from it without repeating the ritual once the chalice has gone around once.

To consecrate the cakes, the woman picks up her athame, and the man, kneeling before her, holds up the dish. The woman draws the Invoking Pentacle of Earth in the air above the plate while the man says:

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